

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence (SV) is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. Sexual violence encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act (i.e., rape), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (i.e., unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment). It includes: forced or alcohol/ drug-facilitated penetration of a victim; forced or alcohol/drug-facilitated incidents in which the victim was made to penetrate a perpetrator or someone else; non-physically pressured unwanted penetration; intentional sexual touching; or non-contact acts of a sexual nature. All types involve victims who do not consent, or who are unable to consent or refuse to allow the act. Sexual violence can also occur when a perpetrator forces or coerces a victim to engage in sexual acts with a third party.<sup>1</sup> A consistent definition of SV is needed to monitor the prevalence of sexual violence and examine trends over time. Primary prevention of sexual violence is defined as: "Approaches that take place before sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization."<sup>2</sup> Sexual violence is a major public health, human rights, and social justice issue. Sexual violence can be committed by anyone: A current or former intimate partner, a family member, a person in position of power or trust, a friend or acquaintance, or a stranger, or someone known only by sight. The most common sexual violence prevention strategies currently focus on the victim, the perpetrator, or bystanders. However, other promising prevention strategies address social norms, policies, or laws in communities to reduce the perpetration of sexual violence.

### How does sexual violence affect the United States?

- Sexual violence is a social phenomenon that permeates all of society. No one is immune from its impact. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)
- Girls who are sexually abused are more likely to
  - Suffer physical violence and sexual re-victimization,
  - Engage in self-harming behavior, and
  - Be a victim of intimate partner violence later in life.<sup>4</sup>
- Many sexual violence survivors can experience physical injury, mental health consequences such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and suicide attempts, and other health consequences such as gastrointestinal disorders, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and gynecological or pregnancy complications. These severe consequences can lead to hospitalization, disability, or death.<sup>5</sup>
- More than 1 in 3 women and nearly 1 in 4 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact at some point in their lives.<sup>10</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 38 men have experiences completed or attempted rape in their lifetimes.<sup>10</sup>

### How does sexual violence affect Indiana?

- The reported lifetime prevalence of rape by any perpetrator, or the proportion of residents in Indiana who have experienced this type of sexual violence, is 18.1 percent, with an estimated 455,000 victims.<sup>3</sup>
- The reported lifetime prevalence of contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking victimization by an intimate partner among women in Indiana is 42.5 percent, with an estimated 1,066,000 victims.<sup>3</sup>

- The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and Indiana Criminal Justice Institute have completed a study of sexual assault reporting for youth. This study found that underreporting is high among Hoosier youth.<sup>6</sup>
- This startling trend is not restricted to adults. Indiana’s youth are victims at high rates as well. According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 13.4 percent of Hoosier high school-aged girls and 6.4 percent of Hoosier high school-aged boys reported being physically forced to have unwanted sexual intercourse.<sup>7</sup>
- According to the 2015 YRBS, 16.4 percent of Hoosier high school-aged girls and 8.6 percent of Hoosier high school-aged boys report experiencing sexual dating violence, which is defined in the survey as one or more times during the 12 months before the survey, including kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to by someone they were dating or going out with among students who dated or went out with someone during the 12 months before the survey.<sup>7</sup>

### **How do we address the problem?**

#### *Policy*

- Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. This landmark legislation established the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program at CDC. The goal of the RPE program is to strengthen sexual violence prevention efforts at the local, state, and national level. It operates in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and four U.S. territories. Indiana’s Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program is administered through the ISDH Office of Women’s Health (OWH).
- Per Indiana Code 12-18-8-6, a county may establish a county domestic violence fatality review team for the purposes of reviewing a death resulting from or in connection with domestic violence (defined in IC 34-6-2-34.5).
- Emergency Nurses Association’s Position Statement on the Care of Sexual Assault and Rape Victims in the ED:  
<https://www.ena.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Position%20Statements/SexualAssaultRapeVictims.pdf>.
- Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) has a webpage specifying legislation detailing the definition of rape to clarifications around consent:  
<https://www.rainn.org/laws-your-stateindiana>

#### *Data Collection*

- ISDH collects sexual violence data through multiple avenues: the Uniform Crime Report, the Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey.
  - The Uniform Crime Report (UCR), a national source of crime data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), is used to gather data reported by Indiana’s law enforcement agencies.
  - The Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS) is a national school-based survey conducted at the state level and analyzed by the CDC. The YRBS captures health data on youth, grades 9-12. Indiana’s YRBS includes questions pertaining to physically forced or coerced sexual intercourse.

- The Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) is a national telephone health survey conducted at the state level and analyzed by the CDC. The BRFS captures health data on adults 18 years of age and older. Indiana’s BRFS has questions pertaining to sexual violence victimization.
- A consistent definition is needed to monitor the prevalence of sexual violence and examine trends over time and inform prevention and intervention efforts. The CDC developed Sexual Violence Surveillance: Uniform Definitions and Recommended Data Elements to create consistent definitions to help in determining the magnitude of sexual violence and aids in comparing the problem across jurisdictions. Consistency allows researchers to measure risk and protective factors for victimization in a uniform manner. Website: [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv\\_surveillance\\_definitions-2009-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv_surveillance_definitions-2009-a.pdf).
- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.
- The Nation Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>
- CDC Sexual Violence Data Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/datasources.html>.

### *Reporting*

- Suspected child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, should be reported to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Abuse/ Neglect Hotline, which is a 24-hour, 7-day a week service line: 1-800-800-5556. There is a local number for every county listed at the DCS website: <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2372.htm>.
- If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual violence
  - Contact your local emergency services at 9-1-1.
  - Contact the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) hotline at 1-800-656-4673. Help is free, confidential and available 24/7. Website: <https://hotline.rainn.org/online>.

### *Programs*

- Primary prevention of sexual violence targets activities that take place before sexual violence has occurred. Prevention of sexual violence on campus can include the following activities: <sup>7</sup>
  - Identifying cultural and social norms that support sexual violence. <sup>8</sup>
  - Strengthening sense of community. <sup>8</sup>
  - Targeting entire community and engage the campus community. <sup>8</sup>
  - Linking sexual violence to alcohol use/abuse in campaigns and messaging. <sup>8</sup>
  - Using peer educators and leaders to spread the word about preventing sexual violence and to improve bystander efficacy and willingness to intervene. <sup>8</sup>
- Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence
  - Promote social norms that protect against violence. <sup>9</sup>
  - Teach skills to prevent sexual violence. <sup>9</sup>
  - Provide opportunities to empower and support girls and women. <sup>9</sup>
  - Create protective environments. <sup>9</sup>
  - Support victims/survivors to less harms. <sup>9</sup>

- OWH recognized the significant effect that sexual assault has had on the overall health of women in the state. The OWH administers the federally funded Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program to help reduce and eliminate the incidence of sexual violence across the state. ISDH approaches sexual violence from a public health perspective, recognizing that primary prevention, including efforts to change cultural norms, behaviors, and practices, is essential to create a state free from violence. Public health is concerned with community and population-based approaches rather than those focused on the individual, and uses data-informed, evidence-based approaches. All sexual violence primary prevention program planning and implementation is rooted in a four-step practice in the public health approach.
- The ISDH OWH chairs and oversees the work of the Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council. Indiana has developed its comprehensive plan to address SV across the state, titled Indiana State Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Plan 2016-2021: [http://www.state.in.us/isdh/files/Indiana\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Primary\\_Prevention\\_Plan\\_2016-2021.pdf](http://www.state.in.us/isdh/files/Indiana_Sexual_Violence_Primary_Prevention_Plan_2016-2021.pdf).
- The Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking (ICESAHT) was formed in October 2015 to answer a critical need in Indiana. ICESAHT's goal is to improve the state's response to victims of sexual assault by bringing awareness to this problem and educating Hoosiers, through primary prevention initiatives, create a culture of care that will, in due course, lead to the end of sexual violence. Website: <https://icesaht.org/>.
- Indiana- Multicultural Efforts to End Sexual Assault (MESA) is a statewide program focused on including traditionally underserved and underrepresented critical populations in sexual violence prevention efforts. The agency works to organize and mobilize local communities in culturally relevant primary prevention strategies to improve the quality of life for individuals and families. For community organizations seeking to work cross-culturally in their prevention efforts, MESA provides training on outreach strategies. MESA is mobilizing Native American, Latina, immigrant, African American/Black, Asian, LGBTQ communities and college campuses in sexual violence prevention efforts. MESA is housed in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University.
- The CDC Technical Packages for Violence Prevention: Using Evidence-based Strategies in Your Violence Prevention Efforts help states and communities take advantage of the best available evidence to prevent violence. The technical package has three parts: 1) strategy to lay out the direction or actions, 2) approach to advance the strategy through programs, policies and practices and 3) evidence for each of the approaches. Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/technical-packages.html>.
  - Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-prevention-technical-package.pdf>.
  - Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>.
- Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Listening and Responding to Survivors: This guide from Safe Horizon and the Center for Court Innovation provides a brief overview of best practices for advocates working with survivors of intimate partner sexual abuse. Website: <http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/IPSA.pdf>

- Injury and Violence Prevention (IVP)-40 (Developmental): Reduce sexual violence.
  - IVP-40.1(Developmental): Reduce rape or attempted rape.
  - IVP-40.2(Developmental): Reduce abusive sexual contact other than rape or attempted rape.
  - IVP-40.3(Developmental): Reduce non-contact sexual abuse.

### Additional Resources

- CDC Sexual Violence: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/index.html>
- CDC Systematic Review of Primary Prevention Strategies for Sexual Violence Perpetration: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1359178914000536>
- Domestic Violence Network of Greater Indianapolis- [www.dvnconnect.org](http://www.dvnconnect.org).
- Emergency Nurses Association (ENA)- Indiana Chapter Forensic Nursing- <http://www.indianaena.org/forensic-home/>
- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence: <http://www.icadvinc.org/>
- Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault: <http://indianacesa.org/>
- Indiana Criminal Justice Institute: <http://www.in.gov/cji/index.htm>
- Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Abuse/ Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556.
- Indiana State Department of Health Office of Women’s Health: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/18061.htm>
- ISDH Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Program: <http://www.state.in.us/isdh/23820.htm>
- Men Can Stop Rape: <https://mcsr.org/>.
- Men Stopping Violence: <http://www.menstoppingviolence.org/>
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence: <http://www.endsexualviolence.org/>
- National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence: <http://www.ncdsv.org/>
- National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center: <http://www.nsvrc.org>
- Prevent Connect: <http://www.preventconnect.org/>
- Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network Hotline: <https://rainn.org/> or (800) 656-HOPE
- Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/index.html>
- Stand 4 Respect: <http://www.stand4respect.org/>
- United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women: <http://www.justice.gov/ovw>
- Violence Against Women Network (VAWnet): [www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org)
- World Health Organization Strengthening the medico-legal response to sexual violence: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/medico-legal-response/en/>

### References

1. Basile, K.C., Smith, S.G., Breiding, M.J., Black, M.C. & Mahendra, R.R. (2014). Sexual violence surveillance: uniform definitions and recommended data elements version 2.0. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv\\_surveillance\\_definitions1-2009-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv_surveillance_definitions1-2009-a.pdf).
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2004). Sexual Violence Prevention: Beginning the Dialogue. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/svprevention-a.pdf>.

3. Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.
4. Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R. & Klevens, J. (2014). Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting\\_the\\_dots-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting_the_dots-a.pdf).
5. Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J. & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs\\_report2010-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf).
6. Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council. Indiana State Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Plan 2016-2021. Retrieved from [http://www.state.in.us/isdh/files/Indiana\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Primary\\_Prevention\\_Plan\\_2016-2021.pdf](http://www.state.in.us/isdh/files/Indiana_Sexual_Violence_Primary_Prevention_Plan_2016-2021.pdf).
7. Indiana State Department of Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health (2016). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/isdh/20627.htm>.
8. American College Health Association. (2008). Shifting the Paradigm: Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence Toolkit, 2008. Retrieved from [http://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Preventing\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Toolkit.aspx](http://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Preventing_Sexual_Violence_Toolkit.aspx).
9. Basile, K.C., DeGue, S., Jones, K., Freire, K., Dills, J., Smith, S.G., Raiford, J.L. (2016). STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-prevention-technical-package.pdf>.
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Sexual Violence is Preventable. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/sexual-violence/index.html>